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ABSTRACT

The current perception of faculty tenure as a guarantee of a job for life can impede the removal of teachers who do not perform up to standards. Such faculty, however, can have an extremely negative effect on overall college quality, and studies have shown that community college faculty do support post-tenure evaluation if it is responsibly carried out. To maintain a commitment to quality in all areas, colleges must adopt legally defensible faculty evaluation systems to ensure quality in the classroom. At Bay de Noc Community College (BNCC), in Michigan, after unsuccessful efforts to dismiss a poorly performing teacher, a committee of faculty began to develop a new evaluation process. The committee conducted itself as a quality circle and developed a policy of faculty development appraisal, determined performance appraisal procedures, established the Board of Trustees' right to manage the institution, affirmed faculty's responsibility to deliver quality instruction, constructed a list of characteristics of good teaching that were observable and measurable, and agreed upon activities both inside and outside the classroom for which faculty had responsibility. The poorly performing faculty member was re-evaluated using the new system and allowed time to remediate deficiencies. When his teaching quality did not improve, he was successfully dismissed. The new evaluation system has improved the quality of instruction and faculty morale at BNCC. Contains 10 references. (KP)

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FACULTY EVALUATION: NUMBER ONE QUALITY CONTROL IN TQM

By Dr. Hans A. Andrews
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The *number one myth* in American education today may be that *you cannot fire a tenured teacher.* Tenure is considered in many places as a guarantee of a job for life. Nisbet (1973) found that tenure was, indeed, such a santuary for most teachers. He found very few teachers ever being dismissed from tenured positions. Many institutions he reviewed had never removed a tenure faculty member. He concluded:

> To argue that tenure is not a refuge for the lazy, incompetent and delinquent, that "with cause shown" such individuals may be dismissed, hardly carries conviction when, as the record makes plain, tenure is such a refuge" (p. 47).

The nation's two largest teacher unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), both had their leaders in the mid-1980's suggest that up to 10% of the teachers in American schools may not be doing the job expected for quality teaching. Albert Shanker of the AFT further stated that it was the fault of the supervisor's ineptitude rather than teacher contracts that allows for poor teachers to remain in the classrooms of American schools (Shanker, 1985).

Impact of Poor Teachers

How much impact does an excellent teacher make upon an institution? One

excellent teacher may have up to 160-175 students in one semester or close to 350 in one year. If a college has 10 such outstanding faculty members the impact of such teaching could affect up to 3,500 students in any one year. *Every poor teacher has the same impact.* How many schools can afford to allow such shoddy work as a projection of their image to the community they serve?

There is a generally accepted perception that good teachers do not support the need for evaluation. This is not true as was found in a study of faculty leaders in a 19-state area of the North Central Association territory (Licata and Andrews, 1990). Community college faculty leaders supported the need for post-tenure evaluation if it is professionally carried out. The majority did not feel evaluation was being carried out effectively in their colleges. They indicated there were no rewards for the good teachers nor were there consequences for the 'slouchers.' There was a general feeling that the administration only provided 'lip service' to quality improvements.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement (C.Q.I.) or Total Quality Management (T.Q.M.) constitutes a recent major shift in academic administrative circles in their quest for improving quality. Moving away from an hierarchical and authoritarian model to a team concept of management in higher education has proven beneficial in such areas as financial aid, admissions and registration, and clerical staff performance. But CQI has come under some criticism by Seymour (1991) and Bosner (1992) for not applying directly to the curricular and instructional arenas. The core processes of teaching and learning have not been adequately addressed, nor is evaluation of instructional performance measured to

ensure quality in the college classroom.

One of the most controversial propositions of the Continuous Quality Improvement philosophy is W. Edwards Deming's belief that performance appraisal or evaluation should be abolished throughout the entire organization because it demolishes teamwork and enforces a ranking system (Gabor, 1990). Yet, at the center of most universities and colleges is a mission which accents quality teaching and the only way to achieve quality instruction is through support, observation, and criteria for excellence in the classroom, in short, an evaluation system.

A major proponent of TQM in higher education, Stanley Spanbauer advocates that this management philosophy will increase placement rates, result in fewer dropouts, increase enrollments, increase employee satisfaction, maintain greater accountability, establish better customer service, and reduce the college's costs (Spanbauer, 1992). Missing in this positive equation is the role of faculty evaluation for better classroom instruction.

Pioneering Colleges

The pioneering colleges in the TQM movement have not moved into the academic arena with TQM practices. Instead, attention has been given to:

1. registration procedures
2. mail distribution
3. physical maintenance
4. payroll
5. printing / copy services

What more natural place for quality improvement than in the development of teachers, and yet the advocates and researchers on TQM in higher education have found a neglect of the classroom (Fisher, 1993).

The push to continually improve one's self as a teacher and the dedication and commitment necessary to create a quality classroom experience for students would seem to lead education to TQM's doorway. But why hasn't there been a broad adoption of TQM principles to faculty evaluation at colleges and universities across the country? The answer to this question may be found in the fact that some college professors are not performing at acceptable levels in the classroom. TQM and CQI are based upon the assumption that everyone is part of the team and that all members will be equally responsible for their performance of responsibilities, hence no performance appraisal is necessary since all people are striving for the best (Nagy, 1993).

This assumption leaves many educators who adhere to CQI principles dumbfounded as to how to respond to the incompetent professor. The adoption of a legally defensible evaluation system is essential to the commitment to quality in the classroom as ineffective teachers are supported to improve through remediation, or removed as a result of their own instructional inadequacies (Seymour, 1993).

Quality Control and TQM - A Case Study

Board of Trustees and instructional leaders know the importance of quality in the classroom. The focus is on the teacher to provide that quality.

Determining quality in the classroom begins with a good teacher evaluation process

that includes an assessment of the teacher's performance in the classroom and their contribution to student learning. It should provide an assessment of strengths and weaknesses and if necessary a prescription and notice to improve when weaknesses are determined.

Occasionally a marginally or poorly performing teacher will not improve and it may be necessary for the college Board to discharge the teacher. At that point it is of the utmost importance that the evaluation system used be legally defensible since most discharges progress through a due process which may include arbitration, and/or the courts.

The need for a legally defensible evaluation system became quite apparent at Bay de Noc Community College. The college attempted to discharge a poorly performing teacher. The information used by the administration to support its recommendation of discharge to the Board included numerous student complaints, lack of student learning, poor student evaluations, decreasing program enrollments, and disgruntlement of colleagues working in the same department. Sporadic administrative evaluations were done but were inconsistently conducted and did not provide recommendations for improvement.

The teacher was notified that his employment was being terminated. The teacher, in accordance with due process provisions in the faculty contract, requested a hearing with the Board of Trustees. The hearing concluded with the Board rejecting the recommendation of the administration and allowed the teacher to continue his employment with the college.

The crux of the Board's decision was not a matter of lack of faith of the administration's recommendation, but rather, of a defensible process in the evaluation of

the teacher. In other words, the information compiled was not legally defensible.

Soon after the Board's decision, a committee of faculty began the work of developing a new faculty evaluation process. A committee was representative of the six academic divisions. Weekly meetings were held over a three or four month period. The committee was chaired by the Dean of Instruction and conducted itself as a Quality Circle. At the conclusion of its work the committee was able to accomplish the following:

1. Developed a policy of faculty development appraisal.
2. Agreed to procedures as to how performance appraisal is to be done.
3. Provided an understanding of the Board of Trustees right to manage the institution and an affirmation of the faculty's responsibility to quality instruction.
4. Arrived at a listing of characteristics of good teaching that are observable and measurable.
5. Agreed to activities associated with classroom and activities outside of the classroom that faculty should be responsible for.

At the conclusion of the faculty's work, a faculty forum was held to explain the process. After the forum, the process was implemented immediately.

Case Outcome

The faculty member that the college attempted to discharge earlier in the year and who was allowed to remain on the faculty was evaluated using the newly adopted evaluation process as were all other faculty members at the institution. After the

evaluation of the faculty member in question was completed, and sufficient time allowed for the faculty member to remediate his deficiencies, the administration again renewed its recommendation to the Board that the faculty member be discharged. After the due process hearing conducted by the Board, with legally defensible material now being presented by the administration, the faculty member was dismissed.

As a result of the work that the institution did to improve the evaluation system the institution could sense improvements throughout the college. Focusing on developing an improved evaluation system at Bay de Noc Community College has led to the following outcomes:

1. The Board of Trustees began seeing the quality of instruction through effective teaching and learning support.
2. Faculty morale, not only in the academic divisions, but throughout the college improved. Faculty began seeing the process of faculty evaluation to be fair, helpful, and necessary.
3. Every evaluation where deficiencies were noted provided a 'notice to remedy.' It became expected that remediation would occur in a reasonable time frame after deficiencies were identified, documented and discussed. The remediation process has helped a number of teachers make improvements in their teaching.
4. Since the overhaul of the evaluation process faculty groups have become more supportive of getting rid of poor teachers.
5. Dismissal proceedings are costly but considered important if poor instruction

does not improve.

It has become a commonly held believe at Bay de Noc Community College that there is no substitute for a well developed, legally defensible, evaluation process as the college pursues issues of quality improvements.

Summary

The movement into Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) or Total Quality Management (TQM) has a long way to go in most of the two-year colleges that have professed to be moving into quality improvements. Research to date has found that most institutions have worked on improvements everywhere in the institution but in the classroom.

The national faculty unions have admitted that there are up to 10% of the faculty in this country not living up to quality teaching practices. They also point the finger to those administrators and boards that allow such poor instructors to exist. The negative impact of each poor teacher in a community college is significant when the number of persons they affect is added up. Leaving several such poor instructors in an institution leaves lasting impressions on a large number of the student body and the public relations office will not be able to overcome these negative impressions gained by students who have experienced these poor instructors.

A case study of a community college without a legally defensible faculty evaluation system was presented. The outcome prior to making major quality improvements in the evaluation system was *devastating* and a poor teacher was left to continue in the classroom.

Including faculty in making major revisions in the process led to a legally defensible system of evaluation and the eventual dismissal of a very poor teacher who failed to remediate deficiencies and defects that were documented.

The successful movement into CQI or TQM by the nation's community colleges must place effective faculty evaluation at the front of whatever improvements they desire.

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